

CHURCH DECORATION.—Long before the reign of Charlemagne, the custom of painting the interior of churches was already diffused among the Gauls, and a curious passage of the poet Fortunatus would seem even to prove that there prevailed a sort of emulation between the ultramontane and the national artists, or those of barbarian origin. The accession of Charlemagne, however, gave a fresh stimulus to the fine arts through the whole extent of his empire; the mission of inspecting the churches and the paintings made part of the attributions of the royal envoys who surveyed the provinces. Every recorded fact conspires to prove that the artists of this school, so far from being the imitators, more or less servile, of those of Byzantium or of Italy, as is sometimes asserted, had the advantage over these two countries in giving free scope to their own powers of cultivation, unencumbered with the load of old traditions which had so long impeded the progress of the ultramontane artists. Hence it is that the Byzantine and Italian productions, from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries will not sustain a comparison with the contemporary works of the Germano-Christian school, which was at once more happy in its processes, more pure in the choice of its forms, and more fruitful in invention. In short, its tendency was rather historical than mystical. For the most part, the stirring scenes of the Old Testament were preferred for representation in the decorations of manuscripts, as well as in those of churches and palaces. The synod of Arras, in 1205, had in some sort consecrated this direction, already so conformed to the national taste, by declaring that painting was the book of the ignorant who could read no other; thus the characters of this popular writing, as it may be called, were multiplied to infinity, in all dimensions and under every variety of form, inasmuch that the magnificence and multiplicity of this kind of ornaments are long induced the monks of Cîteaux, in their pious simplicity, to believe it their duty to signalize as a perilous abuse the constantly increasing luxury displayed by the bishops, in rivalry of one another in decoration of the temples. About the end of the tenth century, two important discoveries were made, namely, the fabrication of tapestry for the adornment of churches, and the art of painting on glass. The glory of the last discovery entirely belongs to France; and assuredly it did not less contribute to the development of modern art, and to the majesty of Catholic worship, than to place the imagination of the Christian in a state of prayer beneath the mysterious charm of that uncertain light which is so favourable to holy contemplation.—*Dulman's Magazine.*

PROSPECTIVE REDUCTION IN THE PRICE OF BUILDING MATERIALS.—Mr. Charles Lindley, the owner of five stone quarries in the neighbourhood of Newark, stated last week, before the House of Commons' Committee on the London and York Railway, that Mansfield stone in London was now 31s. 2d. per ton; and the cost of it, if it were conveyed by the proposed railway, would be 24s. per ton, which would give a saving of 7s. per ton. He had no doubt but that the railway in question would be used extensively for the conveyance of stone. In his neighbourhood it was to be found the best building lime in England; and that lime would, he believed, be conveyed in great quantities to Peterborough, Cambridge, Boston, London, and other places by the proposed railway, and at a greatly reduced rate as compared with the existing cost of conveyance. The price of Mansfield lime was now 30s. 7d. per ton in London; the price would be 20s. 10d. per ton if it were conveyed by the proposed London and York Railway; so that there would, in that case, be a reduction in the price of that lime in London to the amount of 9s. 9d. per ton.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.—At an ordinary meeting, held on the 9th instant, Mr. Kendall, V.P., in the chair, a paper was read "On Ventilation and the prevention of Scurvy," illustrated by Mr. James Kite's apparatus. We shall probably print the paper at length next week. By the permission of General Montreith a series of drawings of Indian buildings was exhibited, and will be described at the next meeting.

MAKING CLEAN THE OUTSIDE.—They are cleansing St. Paul's of the soot and dust of many years. Washing won't serve the purpose: walls and pillars are scraped and holy-stoned; the church gets a "dry scrub"—like Nicholas Nickleby when the well was "froze." At this moment the façade resembles nothing so much as one of those portraits, clear carnation on one side of the face, and smirched with asphalt on the other, which dealers in paintings expose to shew how well they can "restore" pictures. Of course, the dean and chapter know too well the maxims of their own religion to rest satisfied with mere external purification; the cleansing outside is only typical of a more thorough scrubbing to be begun within. And within there is an accumulated dirtiness, of which the outside smoke and weather stains give no idea—the dirt of manion-rusted souls. The buyers who were scourged out of the temple did not venture to make the privilege of seeing it a matter of purchase and sale. The only person on record who sought to earn something by showing the view from the pinnacles of the temple was one whom the dean and chapter would scarcely venture to take into their service. And yet what was done in the temple of the Jews, except by the Devil himself, is daily practised by the servants of a Christian cathedral. The dean and chapter pay their menials, as tavern-keepers do, by permitting them to levy contributions on visitors. At the threshold of St. Paul's, at every landing-place on its stairs, in every dim gallery, the luckless visitant is attacked by some extortioner in the shape of an old man or older woman. Even during the reading of prayers these semi-ecclesiastical showmen continue to gather pence in the aisles. It will be a most unchristian act in the dean and chapter to spend so much money in making clean the outside of the cathedral, if a few wheelbarrows are not hired at the same time to carry away this moral muck from the interior.—*Spectator.*

THE NEW ROYAL GARDENS.—We learn from the *United Gardeners' Journal* that the new royal garden at Frogmore, the formation of which was begun in the spring of 1842, is at length completed. The space within the boundary walls, which are twelve feet high, comprises an area of twenty-two acres; there is also an inner wall of the same height, distant about a hundred feet from the former, and extending round three sides of the enclosure, the north side of which, for the space of nearly a thousand feet in length, forms the site of a magnificent range of metallic forcing-houses, &c. which have been recently erected by Mr. Thomas Clark, of Birmingham. Each wing of this extensive range consists of a spacious riotery in the centre, one hundred and two feet nine inches in length, two peach-houses, each fifty-six feet eight inches long; two pineries, each fifty-three feet; and a green-house, fifty feet: the latter forms the terminus of the wing, the various divisions of which communicate with each other by means of five intervening corridors or lobbies, each of which is seven feet long. It is said that this assemblage of horticultural buildings combines every valuable improvement which has been introduced during the last half century, amongst which are contrivances for ventilation, which are at once simple and original: by the turning of a small windlass (which a mere child may do) it is said any quantity of air may be introduced, and, increased or diminished at pleasure, over the whole interior surface of the buildings. The total length of the entire line of buildings, when completed, will be 936 feet, or 312 yards; so extent which, for a single range, is believed to be without a parallel in the horticultural world. Relative to the system of ventilation adopted we should be glad to hear more.

A COMPETITION FOR YOUNG ARCHITECTS.—The committee of the Hull Mechanics' Institute are making extensive preparations for a grand polytechnic exhibition, to be held early in the month of August next. With a view to encourage emulation, they have offered various premiums; among them is one of "2l. for the best architectural drawing, plan, or elevation of a public building." All the productions sent in for competition should be original, and will be on view during the time the exhibition remains open.

ON BUILDING-RUBBISH AS MANURE.—The rubbish of clay, lime, or stones, obtained by the repairing or pulling down of old buildings, may be used to advantage as a manure, especially if derived from buildings which were tenanted by either men or cattle; because in that case it will contain sulphure and ammoniacal salts, as these are always formed where animal putrefaction and decomposition is going on. Previous to being carried on the field it must be well mixed, broken in small pieces, and freed from large stones; it is also to be protected from much rain, which would soon extract the sulphure and the ammoniacal salts. The amount of lime, loam, and even gypsum, which it contains constitute its value, as well as regulate the quantity which is to be brought on a certain area. At times it may be advantageous to mix the rubbish with humic earth in a compost-heap, in which case it must be well broken to pieces and sifted. A still better manure is the rubbish of burnt-down buildings; because it consists of wood-ashes, soot, much ammonia, sulphure, lime, gypsum, roasted and burnt clay, &c. It is to be broken into small pieces, freed from wood, stones, &c., and soon used, else it would lose some of its ammonia.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, NEW ZEALAND.—An attempt is being made to raise, by subscription, funds sufficient to erect of solid and enduring materials the fabric of St. John's College, Bishop's Auckland, New Zealand. It is estimated, that, in consequence of the low price of building materials in the colony, requisite buildings of stone can be erected for 5,000l., including theological college, collegiate school, native teachers (adult) school, native boys' school, infants' school (including orphan asylum), and hospital.

OXFORD ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—At the annual meeting of the Architectural Society, held last week, the Master of the University in the chair, a paper was read by Mr. Sewell, of Exeter College, on the Early Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Ireland. The report of the society was then read, from which it appears that the society is strictly resolved to confine itself to its proper duties and not suffer itself to be seduced, like a kindred society, into matters irrelevant and controversial.

NOTICES OF CONTRACTS.

"We are compelled by the interference of the Stamp Office to omit the names of the parties to whom contracts, &c., are to be addressed. For the convenience of our readers, however, they are entered in this book, and may be seen on application at the Office of 'The Builder,' 2, York-street, Covent-garden."

For executing Works on the Leeds, Dewsbury, and Manchester Railway, being a distance of about 4½ miles. The principal work on this division is the summit Tunnel, near Morley, which is upwards of 3,000 yards in length.

For the execution of a New Harbour at Greenock.

For the supplying of certain Mines in Cornwall, for twelve months from Midsummer next, with Norway Timber, half Drom and half Longwood, of good quality and average length. The probable quantity required is 710 loads.

For building the intended Somerset County Lunatic Asylum.

For the construction of Two Divisions of the Chester and Holyhead Railway, being Nos. 8 and 12. No. 8 contains a length of 7 miles and 54 chains. No. 12 contains a length of 5 miles and 26 chains.

For the erection of a Building in London for a highly patronised purpose, at the estimated cost of about 30,000l.

For supplying from 3,000 to 4,000 cubic yards of Broken Gurney Granite or other hard stone, for the repair of the Roads of Regent Street, Whitehall, &c., and for 1,500 yards of the same material for the repair of the Albany Road, &c.

For the erection of a Governor's House, and alterations of the Chapel, at the Worcester County Gaol.

For supplying the St. Marylebone Vestry, with materials for keeping the Foot-way and Carriage-way in order.

For the several works contingent on Warming and Ventilating the Chester Castle County Gaol.

For excavating and levelling Land, building Sewers, making a new Road, &c., on the Wheatley Estate, Erit, Kent.

For Bricklayers', Carpenters', Smiths', Plumbers', Painters' and Glaziers' Works, required to be done for one year, from the 24th inst., at the Churches, Chapels, Court-house, &c., of the Parish of St. Marylebone.